

[Note that these questions and answers were prepared between the second, and final, round of general review and the adoption of the proposed policies by the NOAA CIO Council. The policies as posted contain a few spelling and grammatical corrections and some slight format changes.]

## **NOAA Web Presence and Content Management**

*Questions and answers about the proposed policies and other documents*

### **General Questions**

1. The policy development team has gone through two rounds of interviews, including discussion of a first draft set of policies. What changes, if any, have been made to this final draft set as a result of the review process?

There are two major and several minor changes to the package. The first major change regards the DAO 201-1, APPROVAL AND USE OF SEALS, EMBLEMS, INSIGNIA AND LOGOS. A discussion paper was prepared and the topic discussed with the DOC OCIO. It was determined that at this time the DAO 201-1 does not specifically address the use of “graphic identifiers” on Web pages. It was determined that a management process does need to be in place to govern and restrict the proliferation of these “identifiers” and to assure the prominence of NOAA emblem. This policy vests the authority for approval of “graphic identifiers” with the CIOs. It should be noted that upon future revision of DAO 201-1 this policy may need to be updated.

The second major change is the requirement for a Web content management plan and the requirement for a Web Asset Management Plan. These are addressed as a single plan. The plan would address how the CIO will manage its Web assets in terms of complying with the NOAA policies and other guidance such as Department policy. In particular, this approach will facilitate the management of style-related issues at the Office and program level while providing an enterprise-level perspective and management direction.

***The numerous minor changes are identified in the following discussion.***

2. Why are these policies being proposed?

Several factors recommend the promulgation of new policy on NOAA’s Web presence and content management. As you know, NOAA is increasingly a networked enterprise and the Web is a major technology supporting the execution of NOAA’s mission. The Clinger-Cohen Act, OMB Circular A-130, and now the just enacted E-Government Act each require effective management of Federal information technology, including an organization’s Web presence and content management. Additionally, this policy will help NOAA establish a Web presence in accordance with the NOAA strategic plan vision of “One NOAA”.

3. Why are these policies being proposed at the NOAA OCIO level?

The Clinger-Cohen Act mandated the creation of a Chief Information Officer for each agency. This Officer is legally responsible and accountable for an agency's management of its information technology. The Department of Commerce, as have other agencies, delegates some authority to its subordinate organizations such as NOAA and NOAA likewise delegates some authority to the line and major staff offices. The delegation is not total, however. To carry out Vice Admiral Lautenbacher's management initiatives and in the interest of efficiency and effectiveness, the NOAA OCIO is promulgating Web policy at the enterprise level.

4. What is the scope; do these policies apply to all Web assets or only to public sites?

The policies apply to *all* NOAA Web assets. Web assets include sites, infrastructure, and content. Web technology has become integral to NOAA's operations, moving far beyond simply publishing information about NOAA to the public, to becoming a factor even in continuity of operations. As such, NOAA's Web presence evokes the entire structure of Federal information resource management, including security requirements. Web technology is a type of network application, network security concerns the entire network, and so NOAA must establish management policy for all aspects of its Web presence. In addition, OMB Circular A-130 and other controlling guidance requires management of all information technology utilized by a governmental organization.

5. Are these all the policies that will affect the way NOAA utilizes the Web?

No. NOAA, as an operating unit of the Department of Commerce and, as part of the Federal government, is subject to statutes such as the Clinger-Cohen Act and the E-Government Act. Therefore, Department Web policies and statutory requirements also apply to NOAA. Further, changing circumstances will probably necessitate additional policy and ongoing modification of existing policy.

6. Are these proposed policies final?

No. Recognizing the fluid nature of the Web environment these policies will need constant revision. Several additional areas such as the form of governance for Web site style, will be recommend but will not be final until the CIO Council formally endorses these policies.

As the ongoing working group is established the "Style Book" will be further matured. Indeed, in the form presented, the Style Book is intended to be a recommended starting point only.

7. There are hundreds of sites and servers; how can we possibly implement these policies?

It will be recommend that each CIO develop a phased approach or a plan for implementation suitable for their organization. It is assumed that they are best suited to determine which sites will be more pressing than others. It is recognized that some aspects of NOAA's Web presence

will be grandfathered until major revisions, while others will necessitate an affirmative effort to comply with the new policy. The NOAA CIO and the CIO Council will determine the appropriate application of resources, time and money, for implementing the policies.

### **Questions about Specific Policies or Documents**

#### **NOAA Web Presence: Adoption of Departmental Policy**

##### **1. Is it necessary to have a policy for something that should be obvious?**

Several individuals questioned whether DOC policies applied if local policies had already been developed. This policy is intended to reinforce the structure of CIO authority under the Clinger-Cohen Act and to inform NOAA's Web community, that there are applicable management and operational imperatives ranging from the local workgroup and program management all the way to Federal law and the Office of the President. The Web community is responsible for complying with the requirements of Federal Information Resource Management whether or not the requirement happens to be spelled out in local policy or practice.

#### **NOAA Web Presence: Corporate Look and Feel**

##### **1. The purpose for this policy is understandable and reasonable, but how will we implement it? How will oversight be exercised?**

As suggested in our rounds of discussion it will be recommended in the policy that each Line Office establish its own governance council. The chair of this council would act as the Line Office representative to the NOAA Web Enterprise working group. The Enterprise group would only meet to promulgate NOAA wide and DOC policies, establish best practices, and resolve policy issues. The Line Office working group would be responsible for the matter of governance of Web presence in accordance with these policies. It is recognized by this policy that actual implementation would probably be better handled at the level where the owners and developers form a natural unit.

It will be recommended to the CIO Council that the oversight process be incorporated into the registration process maintaining the lines of communication and enterprise -corporate cognizance of NOAA's Web presence.

##### **2. Who would sit on the NOAA Web Style Panel proposed in the draft policy? What is the NAWWG, isn't it defunct?**

The NAWWG, the NOAA Web Affinity Working Group, was proposed as an example of the type of group and representative membership contemplated for the governance body. Based on our discussion it is now envisioned that the NOAA Web Enterprise level working group would replace these groups. (See discussion above)

## NOAA Web Presence: Registration of Web Assets

1. When will the Web Asset Management Information System (WAMIS) be ready for operational use?

As you know, the team has developed a WAMIS prototype. A requisition for application server software and development services to convert the prototype into a operational system in time for the 2003 annual registration is being processed. The data collected during the two previous annual registrations is in the prototype and will constitute the baseline for the 2003 registration.

## NOAA Web Presence: Content Management

1. Wouldn't it be better for the owner and creator of the site manage the content? Shouldn't content management be at the program level rather than at the CIO level?

Refer to the discussion of why these policies are being promulgated at the NOAA OCIO level. The CIO's are responsible for the management of information technology, including the content (and services) made accessible by web technology. They can delegate the working level management to the program level, but as the legally responsible entity should be responsible for the management plan. The CIO's can, of course, delegate to the program areas as they see fit in the creation of the plan.

## Style Book for NOAA's Web Presence (Concept of Operations)

### General

Overtime the Style Book shall at a minimum specify the mandatory and recommended elements of content and presentation for NOAA web sites. It is envisioned that the Style Book shall allow for stylistic variety at the office level compatible with the purpose of the overall policy. In the event of questions arising over compliance the NOAA Web Affinity Working Group meet to determine the proper course of action. Should any of the interested parties reject the group recommendation the CIO Council will make the final decision.

1. The template seems restrictive. Is there any room for flexibility?

The "template" is merely an example of the typical layout of the mandatory elements for high to mid-level sites (designated in the Concept of Operations as first and second degree sites). This includes the placement of items in the footer. Where many items are mandatory. The placement and order in the footer was recommended not mandatory. The appropriate line office governance bodies will control the layout of homepages under its control.

2. The table, "Style and Design Guidance for NOAA Web Pages", seems very restrictive. Is this

how the policies will be applied?

The table presents an example of application of the body of IT guidance to homepage layout. It would fall to the appropriate line office governance body to determine how strictly or loosely to apply the guidance to the sites under their control. Please note that the application of DAO 201-1 is changed, as discussed above.

3. The Concept of Operations generally makes sense, but how would it be implemented, who would oversee compliance?

The line office working group would manage the implementation of the Style Book, including the Concept of Operations.

4. The Style Book does not specifically address the use of the color blue in the NOAA logo or banners?

At this time various color and graphical choices are in use throughout NOAA. It is the intent of the policy to require a clear NOAA identification on all web pages not make a specific color choices for the line offices.

## Glossary

1. Is the glossary complete?

No. There have been several suggested changes and additions to the draft Glossary. The team proposed writing the Glossary to define terms used in the policies, believing this would help avoid confusion about the meaning of the policies. As ambiguous terms are identified they will be added to the glossary.

## **Additional Issues**

1. The policy recognizes that the Web is changing. Users can now customize homepage content but this requires the use of persistent cookies. Has the DOC policy changed?

No. Approval from the DOC CIO is still required before the use of persistent cookies.

2. Were mandatory “editorial boards” considered for content management?

Yes. Due to the various business cultures within the line offices “editorial boards” are recommended but not mandatory.

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